



State of Utah

# Department of Agriculture and Food

Leonard M. Blackham,  
Commissioner of  
Agriculture and Food

## Mission Statement

*Protect and  
Promote  
Utah Agriculture  
and food.*

## Key Issues & Programs

- Air, Soil & Water Quality Protection
- Animal Health
- Chemistry Laboratory
- Food Safety/ Inspection
- Grazing Improvement
- Homeland Security
- Invasive Plant Species
- Marketing & Development
- Utah's Own
- Weights & Measures
- West Nile Virus Prevention
- Wildlife Damage Prevention

## Grazing Improvement Program

The GIP program will be lead by a range specialist and assisted by a policy analysts and a rangeland scientist. The program will provide staff support for the grazing committees and offer sound information regarding grazing issues. Information will flow both ways between the Department of Agriculture and Food and the livestock industry.

The Program has three major components:

1. Expand the authority and ability of regional and state grazing boards to impact federal management plans and current rangeland issues. Input from the boards, USU extension and research by the staff will formulate suggestions to the Governor's Office for official state positions on grazing issues for federal and state agencies.
2. Through a coordinated effort, GIP will expand the number of projects that rehabilitate our natural resources, increase

For decades no one person has been in a position to speak for, or represent, the interests of Utah's livestock industry during the debate over rangeland issues. Under a UDAF proposal, the position of "rangeland specialist" would be created to carry out this important responsibility.

productivity and protect the landscape for all Utahns. The benefits include increased water quality and quantity, added wildlife and livestock capacity, and better weed control; all of which will strengthen our rural economy.

3. A revision of NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act). Work for a process that continues to make land management discussions that are "open" but are more reasonable, affordable and effective in addressing the impacts of invasive species and productive capacity of rangeland and watersheds. GIP must find ways to stop wasting resources on frivolous legal ma-

neuvering. It must bring opponents into the discussion from the beginning. We want federal agencies that are "can do" rather than "can't do" agencies of today. Proper management is more than no action. The lengthy delays that often occur only allow the invasive species to destroy our landscapes.

The last 30 years of fighting over land use issues is now starting to show negative results such as dead forests, severe wildfires, diminished watersheds, and low renewable capacity of the living resources of the land.

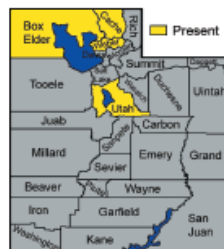
The GIP program will work to reverse these negative trends.

## Noxious Weeds a Biological Wildfire

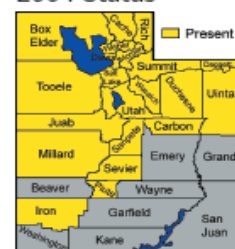
Devastation caused by noxious weeds is enormous. Economic losses from weeds exceed \$20 billion annually in the U.S., and the cost continues to grow. Weeds often reduce crop yields, and can damage watersheds, increase soil erosion, negatively impact wildland plants and animal communities, and adversely affect outdoor recreation. Ecological damage from uncontrolled noxious weed infestations can be permanent, leaving lands unable to return naturally to their pre-invasion condition.

Weed Species	Utah Weed Growth ----- % Counties Infested -----					
	1979	1984	1989	1994	1999	2004
Black Henbane	0	7	35	45	52	52
Dyer's Woad	14	41	69	72	72	72
Jointed Goatgrass	0	10	59	52	55	52
Leafy Spurge	45	38	48	59	62	62
Musk Thistle	79	86	93	97	93	93
Yellow Starthistle	3	14	38	38	38	35
Purple Loosestrife	0	0	0	35	45	52
Squarrose Knapweed	0	0	17	31	28	35
All Weeds	18	25	45	54	56	57

1979 Status



2004 Status



Dyer's Woad Growth

The table above and the maps to the right show a steady growth of weeds in Utah. Source: USU Extension Service